TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

From July 1, 1994 to December 31, 1995 I was working as a visiting fellow in the Laboratory of Molecular Biology at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke in Bethesda, Maryland, USA. During this time I got involved in a project focussing on the transplantation of embryonic stem cell-derived neural precursors into the rat brain. These experiments were done in collaboration with Shigeo Okabe, Karin Forsberg-Nilsson and Ron McKay. The neural precursor cells were derived from the mouse ES cell lines J1, CJ7 and R1 according to the protocol published later by Okabe et al. (Mechanisms of Development 59:89-102, 1996). For in vitro differentiation, the ES cells were aggregated to embryoid bodies which were subsequently plated in defined media and further proliferated in the presence of bFGF. Upon transplantation into the rat brain, cells grown under these conditions consistently gave rise to non-neural adenoid tissue and tumors. After having conducted an extensive series of transplant experiments involving variations in both cell number and ES cell type, we came to realize that the purity of precursor cell populations generated in this manner is not suitable for neural transplantation. As a result, the study was discontinued.

J. L. Bengzon

Johan Bengzon, M.D., Ph.D.
Lund, March 9, 2001